



Public Hearings Fact Sheet

November 3, 4 and 10, 2004

What is the Preferred Corridor?

A Preferred Corridor was selected by the Gateway Connector study team after developing, refining, and evaluating numerous preliminary corridor alternatives within the study area.

The Preferred Corridor is 400 feet wide and approximately 41 miles long (the overall study area is about 37 miles long). The corridor begins in Troy at the interchange of Interstate 55/70 and US 40 and proceeds southwesterly through (or near) the communities of O'Fallon, Shiloh, Mascoutah, Belleville, Freeburg, Smithton, Millstadt, and Waterloo. The corridor ends in Columbia at the interchange of Interstate 255 and Illinois Route 3.

Why is the corridor 400 feet wide?

This dimension is wide enough to accommodate a "high type" transportation facility, such as a multi-lane limited access roadway. The corridor is 500 feet wide along existing IL Route 158 at Scott Air Force Base. Also, the corridor footprint is wider where potential interchanges could be placed for such a facility. However, this study is not recommending or specifying what type of facility could be located in the corridor.

What sort of impacts will there be with this Preferred Corridor?

The Preferred Corridor is the result of an evaluation process designed to minimize the impacts of a new corridor while fulfilling the study's Purpose and Need. Public feedback played an important role in this process.

The Preferred Corridor affects less than 2700 acres. Approximately 600 individual parcels are affected by the Preferred Corridor.

Why was this determined to be the best corridor?

The selected alternative represents the corridor that best meets the future transportation needs of the study area while minimizing impacts to the natural and human environments. Its selection was based on an integrated and balanced consideration of engineering, traffic, socioeconomic and natural resource factors and was found to be a route that has a high degree of engineering feasibility, effectively avoids unique and sensitive resources, and provides the best service to the growing communities.

How much will it cost to build a road in the corridor?

If a four-lane divided facility (with interchanges) were to be built in the corridor, the estimated construction cost is as much as \$500 million in 2004 dollars. This figure includes right of way costs. Many factors influence the cost of roadway construction, such as the number of lanes, how many structures (bridges) will be required, and terrain. Again, this study is not recommending or specifying what type of facility could be located in the corridor.

How much property will be purchased at the end of this study?

There are no plans for property acquisition under the corridor protection study.

Is there funding on the Federal transportation bill for construction?

There is currently no federal funding involved in this project.



Illinois Department of Transportation

What happens to the corridor if subsequent studies show it is not needed?

If the Location and Environmental Study determines that the need no longer exists, the protected corridor can be removed.

Is this the absolute final corridor?

After the public hearings, all public comments will be reviewed. The corridor could be modified based on substantive, relevant comments, such as to avoid a cemetery or historic site not previously identified by the study team.

Following any necessary modifications to the Preferred Corridor, a final corridor is expected to be filed with the Recorder of Deeds in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties by the end of 2004. IDOT will notify property owners in the final corridor by registered mail.

The final corridor could be further modified during future, more detailed study phases. Any such future modifications would most likely be minor shifts and would not mean that entirely new corridor options would be created.

When did the study begin and when will it end?

The study was initiated in February 2003. It will conclude in late 2004.

Why is the study being conducted?

This is a long-range transportation planning study. The purpose of the study is to identify and protect a corridor that could be used for *future* transportation needs in the Metro East, not to solve an immediate problem on area roadways.

This study is being conducted now because population and traffic growth in the region are projected to continue well into the future, *with or without* a protected corridor. The study is not a catalyst for this growth. However, the existence of the corridor could affect the *type* of land use that occurs around or near the corridor. Such land use decisions, and determining where to encourage or discourage various types of development, are and will continue to be made by individual property owners and local planning boards.

What happens without a protected corridor?

The consequences of failing to plan for future anticipated transportation needs could be significant. If growth and development in the region continue at the current pace, the demands placed on existing transportation systems will increase. As a result, travel times and congestion will increase, existing facilities will require more maintenance, and, most importantly, the safety of the motoring public will be compromised.

What has growth in the region been in the past?

Many areas outside the study area experienced population declines over the 1980-2000 period, such as East Carondelet, Brooklyn, Venice, and East St. Louis. During the same period, most of the communities in the study area grew at very robust rates. Some examples of this include Shiloh, 631% increase; Troy, 126% increase; Columbia, 85% increase; and O'Fallon, 79% increase. Belleville's population declined about 1% over this period.

What kind of growth is expected in the Gateway Connector study area?

East-West Gateway projections for the 2000-2025 period show 10% to 29% population increases in analysis areas traversed by the Preferred Corridor. Individual communities are projecting even greater growth: for 2000-2020, O'Fallon expects a 70-79% increase and Columbia anticipates a 37% increase.



Is it legal to protect a corridor like this?

Yes. The corridor protection process is a state statute. It is found in the Illinois Highway Code as Statute 605 ILCS 5/4-510. The statute was first enacted by the General Assembly in 1967.

What kind of traffic would use this corridor?

The study's traffic projections show that (if a roadway facility is placed in the corridor) 15,000 to 48,000 vehicles could use the corridor each day. This is not "new" traffic but represents vehicles being "removed" from existing routes, thereby reducing congestion on existing roadways. These projections also show that most people who would use the corridor would be making local trips rather than motorists traveling straight through the corridor.

Will an interstate-type highway go in this corridor?

This study is not recommending nor ruling out any improvements that could be made in the corridor. Corridor protection *does not* mean it has already been determined that a new roadway facility is needed.

After this study, a Location and Environmental Study ("Phase I") will be conducted. The Phase I study will evaluate a variety of options - *including the option of no improvements* - in order to determine what transportation improvements could best handle the expected population and traffic growth. The findings of the Phase I study could indicate that improvements to existing routes, increased mass transit, or other alternatives would solve transportation needs better than a new roadway facility. However, if the Phase I study finds that a new facility would be the best solution, then a corridor will be in place for its use. Such a facility would not necessarily be a multi-lane, limited-access highway. It is possible that, depending on the traffic needs, a different facility type could be used in various locations.

When will construction start?

This study is not a construction project. There are no plans, timetable, or funding in place for any new construction within the corridor. If the Phase I study shows a new facility to be the best solution for future transportation needs, it is not likely that any construction would begin for 10 to 15 years at the earliest.

What does this corridor mean to property owners?

Property owners within the final corridor will not be prohibited from using their property as they wish. Property will not be "seized" as a result of this study. The corridor protection statute spells out a process that IDOT and property owners must follow.

If and when IDOT needs to acquire property, its value will be determined at the time of purchase, not at the time the corridor is recorded. Property value is not "frozen" at the time of corridor protection. Proximity to a transportation corridor is not likely to depress property values because the property will most likely be used as it is today, even after being protected.

How will this corridor benefit the region?

This corridor will benefit the growing Metro East communities and their residents and businesses by providing a transportation system in the eastern portion of the bi-state metropolitan region. As the region continues to grow, this growth will stress the existing infrastructure. The benefits to the region are greater mobility and reduction of accidents.

One of the major goals of the Illinois transportation system is to enhance the state's comparative economic advantage and to expand or retain economic bases and employment in all areas of Illinois, rural and urban. The benefit of this project is it will both sustain the existing growth and enhance the ability for the region to grow in the future. Because of the increased mobility this corridor provides, it even has the potential of assisting in the redevelopment of the core metro east urban area.



Businesses will benefit from the reduced travel time and subsequent reduced transportation costs. The communities adjacent to the corridor will benefit from a new efficient transportation facility as it helps them make future development and planning decisions and encourages businesses to stay in the community and grow.

What has IDOT done to involve the public during this study, especially opposition groups?

Public involvement has been a core component of this study. In addition to the three previous series of public meetings, the study team has held over sixty meetings with community leaders, legislators, state and federal environmental resource agencies, property owners, residents, and special interest groups (including opposition groups) throughout the study.

All public comments were reviewed as part of the public involvement process. Reasonable suggestions or recommendations that addressed the study's Purpose and Need for a new corridor, or revealed significant issues or impacts, were incorporated into the team's analysis and decision-making.

When will maps of the Preferred Corridor be put on the website, www.gatewayconnector.com?

The maps will be posted after the public hearings.

For more information:

E-mail: studyteam@gatewayconnector.com
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Thank you for attending tonight's public hearing.

IDOT appreciates your interest and participation in the Gateway Connector Corridor Protection Study.